

IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 1. This sheet, which includes Fig. 1, replaces the original sheet including Fig. 1.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, and 9 are amended herein. Support for the amendment of claim 1 is found in the specification as filed, at least in the drawing and at page 7, lines 20-22. Support for the amendment of claims 3 and 4 is found in the specification as filed, at least at page 6, lines 27-31. Support for the amendment of claim 8 is found in the specification as filed, at least at page 6, lines 2-8. Support for the amendment of claim 9 is found in the specification as filed, at least at page 6, lines 13-15. Further, the specification is amended. Support for this amendment is found in the specification and claims as filed.

In the outstanding Office Action, the drawing was objected to under 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) and 37 CFR 1.83(a). Claims 3, 4, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 1, 2, and 5-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over the English abstract of JP 2001-108,792 A ("JP-792").

In response to the drawings objection, a corrected drawing sheet is submitted. The specification is amended as necessary to correspond with the drawing changes. It is believed that the drawing objection is obviated by this amendment. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this objection be withdrawn.

Claims 3, 4, 8, and 9 have been amended to more particularly describe the claimed invention. It is believed that such amendments are sufficient to apprise one of ordinary skill in the art to the scope of the invention. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that these rejections be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, and 5-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over JP-792. Claim 1, from which claims 2-9 depend directly or indirectly, is presently amended. Support

for the amendment of claim 1 is found in the specification as filed, at least in the drawings and at page 6, lines 4-8. As amended, claim 1 is directed to a method for treating radioactive metals. Radioactive steel-based metal wastes are separated into steel-based metal and nuclear fuel substances by melting the steel-based metallic wastes. The steel-based metallic wastes are melted to oxidize the nuclear fuel substances by oxygen in an atmospheric air; and the nuclear fuel substances are separated as oxide.

JP-792, on the other hand, discloses a method of separating metallic wastes from actinide elements. In the method of JP-792, metal refuse to which nuclear material is adhered is placed into the furnace. An oxidizing gas is blown into the molten metal in the furnace.

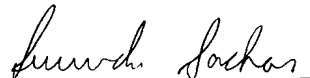
Applicants submit that the method of the present invention is patentably distinct from the JP-792 method. The present invention ensures separation of nuclear fuel substances from radioactive steel-based metal wastes in that the radioactive steel-based metal wastes melt with oxygen in the atmospheric air, eliminating the need for oxidizing gas being blown into the molten metal in the furnace. This is not taught or suggested by the JP-792 reference. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 2, and 5-9 are not obvious over the JP-792 reference, and should be allowed.

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In light of the above discussion, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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